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ABSTRACT

In the early 1900s, the small, penny newspapers of E. W. Scripps were aimed primarily at working class readers, had a policy of limited advertising, and relied upon circulation to provide the bulk of revenues. The "Spokane Press" was conceived in 1902 with E. W. Scripps, his sister Ellen Browning Scripps, and George Putnam as copartners. The paper was to follow the Scripps plan already established in Cleveland, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Kansas City, San Diego, and Los Angeles. Scripps demanded an aggressive editorial policy and lively news, but permitted no attacks on the competition. Putnam was handed many similar orders, but eventually began to violate them, first by attacking the "Chronicle" in several editorials, and later by expanding the paper to eight pages in order to increase advertising volumes and revenues. Scripps feared this would make the "Press" a carbon copy of the news and editorial policy of the competing Republican, business-oriented Spokane papers, the "Spokesman-Review" and the "Chronicle", which would have destroyed the carefully cultivated distinctiveness of the "Press." Putnam eventually resigned over this issue and Scripps's policies became increasingly unrealistic and unfeasible. (SRT)

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FOUNDING THE SPOKANE PRESS

E. W. Scripps and An Ambitious New Publisher Debated the Issues of Newspaper Journalism

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History Division

FOUNDING THE SPOKANE PRESS

E. W. Scripps and An Ambitious New Publisher Debated the Issues of Newspaper Journalism

The penny newspapers of E. W. Scripps grappled in the early 1900s with a series of questions characteristic of American newspaper journalism throughout the twentieth century.

Can a newspaper address a selective, working class readership without losing its role in the community as a whole? Can a newspaper management model be transplanted successfully from one city to another city and region? What are the dimensions of newspaper competition? How far can advertising subsidization of the press extend before advertisers dominate news and editorial decisions?

In his lifetime, E. W. Scripps founded 20 newspapers, but records of actual agreement terms, the day-to-day decisions and the management policies that guided these new newspapers have been largely negelected by communications historians. Oliver Knight's I Protest touches on a few elements, and fills in some of the background.[1] Clifford Weigle's 1964 Journalism Quarterly article on "The Young Scripps Editor" was a retrospective

interpretation of the founding of the Houston Press. Weigle emphasized Scripps' interview with Paul Edwards rather than the terms, policies and events of the founding.[2] A broad perspective on turn of the century general newspaper management practices is outlined in Lee's classic, The Daily Newspaper in America.[3] "The American Newspaper," Will Irwin's pioneering critique of the US press provides a critical evaluation of newspaper management that compares Scripps' ideas with those of his contemporaries.[4]

Communications historians, however, have focused most of their attention on the Ohio newspapers, and Scripps' role as a founder, innovator and manager of a newspaper group. They have largely neglected the individual Scripps newspapers of the Pacific Coast and especially the Northwest. The split in 1917 between E. W. and his eldest son, James G. Scripps, took the Northwest newspapers--Seattle Star, Tacoma Times, Portland News and the Spokane Press--controlled by James outside of the main Scripps organization.[5] As a result historians Scripps have largely neglected E. W.'s earlier involvement in the Pacific Northwest.

Scripps editors--like George Putnam of the Spokane Press--were required to correspond regularly with E. W. by mail on their problems and policies. The result is a rich source of data on American newspaper economics and editorial policies in the early 1900s. This research paper is based upon the George Putnam manuscripts collection at the University of Oregon Library, the Vance H. Trimble collection from the Archives of the Scripps

Trust, Cincinnati, and the Ellen Browning Scripps manuscripts collection at the Ella Strong Denniaon Library, Scripps College, Claremont, California.

An analysis of these sources explains the elements that brought the Putnam-Scripps partnership in the Spokane Press to a premature end and suggest themes that have remained significant in later twentieth century American journalism. These are the preliminary conclusions:

--The nineteenth century idea of a small, penny newspaper aimed primarily at working class readers, but ignoring the community at large, was no longer attracting and holding readership as it once had.

--Scripps' policy of limiting advertising, and relying upon circulation to provide the bulk of revenues to support newspapers was no longer viable.

--The Scripps-Putnam dialogue in Spokane was an indicator of the economic changes ahead in the twentieth century for US newspapers.

The Spokane Press was conceived during a meeting on August 17, 1902, at E. W.'s adobe ranch home, called Miramar, near San Diego. At that Miramar meeting, E. W., his sister Ellen Browning Scripps and George Putnam agreed to become co-partners in the new Pacific Northwest newspaper. It was to follow the Scripps plan already established at the Cleveland Press and Cincinnati Post as well as at other Scripps newspapers in St. Louis, Kansas City, San Diego and Los Angeles. This meant, in Scripps words, ". . .a

small paper for the sake of being a small paper on the theory that a small paper is more popular than a large paper."[6] It also meant the new Spokane newspaper's editorial stance, again in Scripps words, ". . .is to be that of the advocate and special pleader of the laboring and poor classes as against the whole plutocratic and aristocratic combinations, political, economic and social."[7]

When in 1901 Putnam first proposed starting a new newspaper for Scripps he was no stranger to the Scripps or to Miramar. Putnam earned a civil engineering degree from the University of Nebraska, where he also founded the University's student newspaper. He came to San Diego as a surveyor for the San Diego Water and Flume Company. When Putnam was laid off by the Flume Company during the winter, he worked as an advertising solicitor for the San Diego Tribune. From the Tribune, he became Scripps' secretary at Miramar in 1899-1900 before moving on to manage the Scripps News Association office in San Francisco.[8] Since April, 1901, Putnam had been appealing to both Ellen and E. W. Scripps for financial backing in a new newspaper, at Berkeley, Portland or Spokane.[9]

Ellen Scripps, an experienced news woman in her own right and a trusted advisor to Scripps, gave Putnam approval in April, 1901, to buy the Berkeley Gazette for the Scripps newspaper group. The deal collapsed, however, when the Gazette sold for a higher price than Putnam and Miss Scripps were prepared to pay.[10] In July, 1902, Putnam brimmed over with enthusiasm for the

prospects of a new Scripps newspaper in Spokane. Just back from a trip to Spokane, he wrote Miss Scripps, "I have studied the field, talked with the business men of Spokane, and am confident that the paper will pay almost from the jump as conditions could not be more favorable for a new paper conducted along right lines."[11]

Putnam at E. W.'s direction expanded the memorandum dictated by Scripps at the August 17 Miramar meeting into a contract. This took the form of a letter from Putnam to L. T. Atwood, a former Cincinnati Post reporter who acted as Scripps' agent from the so-called Central Office in Cincinnati. Putnam's letter spelled out the financial and other guidelines, determined by Scripps, under which Putnam would found and operate the Spokane Press.

Putnam committed himself to start the Spokane Press with an equipment investment of $7,000 supplied by Scripps. He could also draw on Scripps for up to an additional $5,240 in operating expenses until reaching a break even point. The Press was obligated to pay four per cent interest on the money Scripps advanced. When the Press was on a paying basis, a stock company would be formed with E. W. and his sister holding 51%, Putnam 25% and 24% reserved for A. D. Bowen, a Portland newspaperman who was expected to join Putnam in establishing the paper.[12] Like Putnam, Bowen was providing no capital.

On the surface, the contract was a golden opportunity for young newspapermen like Putnam and Bowen to work their way into

one quarter ownership of a daily. It also contained some thorns. Putnam's salary as general manager of the Spokane Press was limited to $12 a week. That would be less than the wages of the union printers. In addition, if Putnam exceeded the $12,240 estimated to be necessary before the Press was on a paying basis, he would lose 1% of his stock ownership for each $240 he spent beyond the $12,240 limit.[13]

On the other hand, if Putnam could put the Press on a paying basis for less than $12,240, Scripps proposed to pay him and his associates $3 for every $1 he under ran the $12,240 estimate. There was a permanent lid on Putnam's and the salaries of other Press managers: in total the combined salaries of the general manager and the editor could not exceed five per cent of the gross receipts even after net profits reached or exceeded Scripps' 15 per cent earnings target.[14]

What sparked Putnam's enthusiasm, and made Scripps willing to venture $12,240 that a new newspaper would succeed in Spokane? By 1902 railroads had made Spokane the hub of a regional mining, farming and lumber economy that stretched across eastern Washington, eastern Oregon, northern Idaho and western Montana and British Columbia. Hydro electric power from the Spokane Falls and nearby rivers was beginning to be tapped. Population in the city itself was spurting with the rest of the Pacific Northwest in the region's post Alaska-Yukon Gold Rush boom. Scripps and Putnam hoped to ride the crest of a population wave that had already seen Spokane grow from 19,922 to 36,748 between

1890 and 1900.[15] In retrospect, Putnam and Scripps were shrewd judges of Spokane's prospects; the city's population shot to 104,402 by 1910.[16]

In the newspaper world, however, Spokane was an anomaly. Nearly every town or city in America larger than a village could boast at least two competitive newspapers in the first decade of the twentieth century. But there was no daily newspaper competition in Spokane, where the morning Spokesman-Review and the evening Chronicle were both controlled by William H. Cowles.[17]

Spokane appeared to offer exactly the kind of daily newspaper monopoly that brought out Scripps' non-conformist instincts. After Putnam mailed a bundle of Spokane newspapers to Miramar, Scripps began to share Putnam's enthusiasm for the new newspaper in eastern Washington. Both Cowles dailies were business oriented and conservative. "For our purposes I would regard the Spokesman Review as just as good a Republican paper as I would the Portland Oregonian, the San Francisco Chronicle or Los Angeles Times."[18] That meant the Scripps newspaper would have the field to itself in attacking business, blasting the trusts and urging on labor.

The nature of the new Scripps newspaper's competition in Spokane also prompted Scripps to impose on Putnam what he called an "irrevocable rule." It was that Putnam was prohibited from making ". . .any attack, direct or by insinuation, in its printed pages or by mouth and spoken words of any manager, editor,

advertising or circulation solicitor, on the character of its contemporary, morning or evening, or on the character of the publisher or publishers of the same."[19] Scripps justified his check on Putnam by explaining he knew from his own experience the temptations a new publisher faced in this area, and that he was protecting him from the hazards of his own mistakes. By these warnings Scripps hoped to avoid ". . .abusive articles."[20] But he still wanted an aggressive editorial policy and lively news.[21]

This rule was added to those Scripps had already outlined in the earlier memorandum of agreement and the partnership agreement. These included detailed instructions on advertising sales, contracts and rates. Scripps also absolutely prohibited free newspapers for ". . .advertisers, policemen, employes or any one else."[22] In addition, the Press was committed to use the Newspaper Enterprise Association features, the Scripps News Association wire service and pay its pro rata share of all future cooperative Scripps projects.

Not attacking fellow publishers was only one of many Scripps rules Putnam became aware of in the course of the Press' founding. Scripps soon dictated a six-page letter giving Putnam more rules for his new role as general manager of the Press. The first rule was that Putnam should send to Scripps copies of his correspondence with other units of the Scripps concern.[23] This would, Scripps observed, save Putnam from "costly errors." It also ensured that Scripps was kept aware of what was happening at the Spokane Press. Don't under any circumstances, Scripps also

warned, announce the date of your first publication until you have your linotype, press and printing operations in working order.[24] Don't attempt to sell advertising, get subscribers or line up news boys until after the first publication. "Make haste slowly, and be sure that the money expended in this way will return you a hundred-fold."[25]

Another irrevocable rule Scripps added was that there was to be no circulation solicitation at any time unless Putnam could guarantee delivery without fail to new subscribers. That applied, Scripps emphasized, to the first day of delivery, second, third, fourth and tenth days.[26] Putnam also learned from Scripps that the promised start-up money for the Press would only be available after he corresponded with Atwood in Cincinnati, and learned the procedures for processing such requests. If he made contracts or promises of payment before getting Scripps' approval through Atwood, he might find himself paying out of his own pocket, Scripps warned.[27]

A day later Scripps sent a three-page letter outlining his experiences in circulation solicitation, and directing Putnam to write out his subscription plans as an addendum to the contract he had previously submitted to Atwood in the Cincinnati central office.[28] Putnam began to realize the problems of dealing with Scripps in San Diego through the Scripps Central Office in Cincinnati.

For example, when Putnam wished to draw on his promised loan, he had to allow three weeks to a month for mail to go fro

Spokane to Cincinnati to San Diego, and then travel the reverse route. In addition, Putnam had to specify the purposes for which the money would be spent, and loan requisitions would be processed only once a month. Don't ask for money by telegram, Atwood also warned him.[29] But, by then Putnam had already attempted to draw on the bank for $600 by wire for a down payment on a linotype. For his efforts he got no money, and another letter from Scripps on the evils of doing business by telegraph. Money would be available, "providing only that you shall follow a regular and business-like course," Scripps scolded.[30] Behind Scripps' apparent mania for correspondence was his desire that his scattered newspapers first attempt to solve problems locally, and when calling on him or the Central Office for help, present an organized and well-thought out plan of action.

Despite the growing number of "irrevocable rules" from Scripps and the Central Office, Putnam managed to put out the first issue of the Spokane Press on November 7, 1902--beating Scripps' original target date of December 1.[31] Totaling up expenses, however, Putnam discovered he had over run the $7,000 equipment and installation costs by $3,242.92, eroding the $5,240 operating loss cushion Scripps had promised.[32] Putnam's salutary editorial announcing the Press was brief. He promised to print all the news all the time, and to support the development of Spokane and the Inland Empire. "Its news columns will be uncolored, its politics the advancement of Spokane, and its price within the reach of all."[33] At one cent per copy or

25 cents a month delivered by carrier the Press had already made good on one promise to the community.

Putnam encountered so many problems in starting the Press he didn't write a report to Scripps until November 22--three weeks later. First, Bowen, whom Putnam had recruited as editor of the Press, suddenly realized he could not support his family on $12 a week and quit.[34] Putnam proposed he carry on alone--an idea Scripps had previously rejected.[35] Putnam's report on advertising was more encouraging. He was making rapid progress, and he had turned down department stores asking for more advertising space than the Scripps rules permitted. The news boy carrier force was growing steadily, and circulation on November 21 had topped 400. The Press' news staff was inexperienced, but "cheap" as Putnam put it. The mechanical employees were all paid union scale. Putnam was already worried, however, about his evening competitor, the Chronicle. It was using "all of the devils [sic] devices to bother and hinder us, but [we] will wear them out, tho [sic] we are somewhat retarded by the almost total stoppage of street sales."[36] Putnam was also developing a dislike for Cowles, publisher of the competing Spokane dailies. "He is a plutocrat all right, runs a scab stereotype office, cannot use the union label, is against unionism . . ."[37]

Competition--as Scripps feared--became Putnam's main concern. News boys for the rival Chronicle made life miserable for the Press street vendors. Later the Press reported the arrest and conviction of an 11-year-old Chronicle news boy for

assaulting a Press news boy for ". . .cutting in on the business done by the other boys who were selling the Chronicle."[38] Even more threatening to the new Press, however, was the appearance of the one cent evening Spokane Bulletin, published by the Cowles organization. In fact, introductory issues of the Bulletin were distributed free. Putnam, faced with direct competition at the penny level, declared Cowles' response to Press was "unscrupulous." Scripps took the Cowles competition calmly. "What you characterize as 'unscrupulous,' and what you believe to be . . . a wicked warfare against yourself is in fact nothing more than common, every-day, hum-drum newspaper competition."[39] Scripps told Putnam he had better get used competition for it was a fact of newspaper life.

Nor did Scripps think the Bulletin posed a long term threat to the Press. "All the money Cowles puts into the Bulletin he will not have to put somewhere else. If Cowles gives away one daily paper [Bulletin] for nothing, the readers of his other papers will think that they are not worth much," Scripps added. "It will help your circulation rather than hurt it."[40]

Putnam, however, had already laid a trap by which he could strike back. In January, the Press reported that it had signed a five-year union shop agreement with the Spokane Falls Typographical union No. 193.[41] The Press had been paying union scale since its opening. In mid-February the Spokane City Council was scheduled to open bids on city advertising, a contract Cowles' Chronicle had enjoyed since 1893. Ten days

before the bid opening, the Typographical Union sent every member of the City Council a letter pointing out that two years earlier the Council had passed a resolution that all city printing and advertising would be awarded only to ". . .such offices as are entitled to the Union Label."[42] The Press, the only union produced newspaper in Spokane other than Freeman's Labor Journal, ran the resolution under a page 1 banner "ORGANIZED LABOR DEMANDS ITS RIGHTS OF COUNCIL IN CITY PRINTING CONTRACT." When the bids were opened, the Press emerged not only with lowest rate ". . .but it is the only daily which has complied with the requirements of the council and is entitled to the union label."[43]

Putnam also added a page 1 editorial that began, "Public printing is no longer a private graft in Spokane. The looting of the city treasury by the local Newspaper Trust has been stopped. By its bids for city printing last night the Trust confesses that it is overcharging the city under the present contract sixty per cent. And the sole cause of the saving to the taxpayers of thousands of dollars is the competition of THE PRESS."[44] Scripps was infuriated when copies of the Press reached him at Miramar. "I see that you are bound to make the regulation damn fool of yourself," Scripps' letter to Putnam began. Putnam's news coverage of the city advertising bids was "flagrantly opposed to the principles laid down by me and agreed to by yourself."[45] Scripps warned Putnam another violation of his rules about competition would mean his removal from the Press.

But Scripps' letter was probably still en route when Putnam again needled the Cowles newspapers. Putnam had been keeping track of advertising in the Chronicle. He discovered some ads were dropped in Chronicle country editions. The Press called attention to these omissions in a page 1 story, headlined "HOW LOCAL NEWSPAPER TRUST BREAKS FAITH WITH PATRONS."[46] Putnam charged that Cowles in the interest of "miserable economy" had dropped 1100 inches of advertising from its country editions in the month of February. With righteous indignation, the Press trumpeted: "Country subscribers who paid for a complete newspaper, were given a part of a newspaper, and advertisers who paid for all the circulation, were given but part of the circulation."[47]

Scripps had his secretary, J. P. Hamilton, write to Putnam a review of the "irrevocable rules," especially those on competition. He emphasized that these letters and memorandums were ". . .a sort of constitution of fundamental laws of business, and the whole should be read over by you and your associates at least once a week."[48] When Putnam protested the "scolding" letters he was receiving from Miramar, Scripps was unsympathetic. "I have not the time or desire to convince you that I am honest and sincere in my endeavor to make you and the Spokane Press a success."[49]

When the city council voted to designate the Press the Spokane's official newspaper on March 10, Putnam's antagonism toward the Cowles newspapers was under control. The Press

reported the council's decision enthusiastically, but factually. There were no references to the "newspaper trust" or to "graft."[50] But Putnam couldn't resist a thrust in the direction of the Spokesman-Review or Chronicle whenever an opportunity arose. When the Spokesman-Review and Chronicle printers struck, Putnam ran a page 1 banner heralding the fact that the Cowles papers were unable to publish. The Press' coverage of the strike was reported from the Typographical Union's viewpoint.[51]

Reporters had been excluded from meetings of the Spokane County Board of Equalization meetings until the Press demanded they be opened to the public.[52] Putnam probably was aware that the Cowles publications frequently asked for and received reductions in tax assessments. With heavy-handed humor, the Press reported that the Spokesman-Review and Chronicle representatives in pleading for assessment reductions ". . .piped their little roundelay of woe so pitifully and pathetically that a stone would have made to roll over and kick itself for compassion."[53] The Cowles managers told the tax board that both the Spokesman-Review and the Chronicle had lost money in the preceding year, and their Associated Press franchise did not represent an assessable property.[54]

In print Putnam cooled his combativeness toward his rivals. But with the Spokesman-Review and the Chronicle running 12 and 16 standard-size pages daily full of large advertisements, Putnam was constantly reminded of the competitive edge the Cowles papers commanded in advertising. It was finally over two basic issues--

the size of the Press and the role of advertising in Scripps newspapers--that Putnam and Scripps found themselves completely at odds. Putnam appealed to Scripps on April 10, 1903, for additional equipment investment in order to buy a second type-setting machine. He needed it, he told Scripps, because the one linotype was busy at key news hours setting advertising.[55] Scripps waited two weeks before replying "No" in a rambling seven-page discussion of economics and news policy. The letter recorded dissatisfaction over the Press' most recent profit and loss statement (incomplete Scripps said), and advised Putnam on the selection of successful news boys (the sons of the well-to-do are preferable to street arabs who smoke cigarettes and shoot craps).[56]

The heart of Scripps' message was clear. He didn't intend to compete with the Cowles newspapers in Spokane in number of pages printed or volume of advertising. He believed that a 2 to 1 ratio between advertising receipts and circulation income showed a penny newspaper was healthy.[57] The Spokane Press profit and loss statements for June through November, 1903, show a ratio of more than 4 to 1 between advertising and circulation revenues.[58] But Scripps wanted a small, profitable and lively newspaper. "Now I see the Spokane Press every day. Candidly I must tell you it is dull." Scripps believed that "the things in the newspaper which make it grow are confined to a space of less than a column a day on the average." Scripps added: "A wise manager concentrates all of his thoughts upon the one effort, to

produce every day some thing, or several things, in the editorial or news columns which the public must have."[59] He wanted, Scripps made clear, small profits from a small Spokane Press before he would commit additional equipment investment to Spokane. Scripps emphatically considered news more basic than advertising. "If advertisements are necessary to pay expenses, it is still more necessary to make a newspaper that will justify advertising."[60] Still grumbling over the incompleteness of the Press' profit and loss statements, Scripps in early June finally authorized an additional linotype for Spokane, reducing Putnam's promised stock share in the Press by the amount required.[61]

The final explosion between Scripps and Putnam came in mid-September, 1903. Putnam proposed breaking with Scripps' small paper tradition by expanding the four-page Press to eight pages to accommodate full page and half page ads regularly. "The majority of our big advertisers refuse to renew their contracts unless we go to eight pages in which case, however, they agree to sign up for double the space they are now using," Putnam claimed.[62] The still small size of Spokane's population was a barrier to the success of Scripps' four-page formula in eastern Washington, Putnam believed. "But I know the public to whom I must cater . . . and the advertiser to whom I must look for support to make this a newspaper property, for the town is too small to ever live off circulation," Putnam wrote Scripps.[63]

Scripps ignored his rule about business by wire to telegraph Putnam, "Answering your letter of fourteenth. Under no condition

will your proposal be accepted."[64] Scripps confirmed the telegram with a letter dictated so hastily that his secretary mailed a handwritten copy rather than the usual typed version. "Reduce your expenses to a point below receipts immediately," Scripps urged Putnam, "and continue the publication for a time longer, at least, so as to give me time to show you by your own experience in the coming weeks that you are wrong or failing that enable me to get another man who has confidence in me and my methods."[65]

Scripps talked over Putnam's demands for an eight-page page paper with his sister before writing further--a sure sign he was upset at Putnam's proposal. Ellen attempted to calm the storm. She reminded her brother, he wrote Putnam, ". . .that in my earlier days I had had the same sort of mental aberration, and that successively every new Manager that had ever been on hers and mine, or on my own papers, had at some time, sooner or later, gone through the same phase of mind that you are evidently suffering from now."[66] The Press was on the verge of success, Scripps said. "I would advise you to shut up shop and stop business instantly . . .were it not my conviction that the Spokane Press . . . is the best newspapers (sic) property I know of in the country. I am firmly resolved not to alter my order, no matter how much you plead or argue. Upon my honor, this is my last and final word on this subject."[67]

Of course, it wasn't his last or the final word in the dispute between Scripps and Putnam over the Press' size. Milton

A. McRae, who in 1903 held the title of general manager of Scripps newspapers, visited Scripps' Pacific Northwest newspapers in the same weeks that the Scripps-Putnam debate over the Press' expansion was taking place. He paused in Spokane September 21 to look over the Press, and discussed Putnam's expansion plans. McRae stopped in San Francisco to write a seven-page, single-spaced gossipy letter to Scripps about all he had learned on his Pacific Northwest tour. He made only the briefest mention of Putnam, the Press and Spokane.[68]

At Miramar a few days later, McRae sounded out Scripps on the possibility of buying out Scripps' interest in the Press. An angered Scripps promptly suspected Putnam of suggesting the buy-out to McRae. ". . .under no possible conditions, or under no circumstances whatever, would I consider the question of its [Press] sale, or the sale of any part of it," Scripps wrote Putnam.[69] At about the same time, Putnam decided to expand the Press to eight pages whether Scripps would put up additional money or not. ". . .without further aid or financial assistance from you, I am compelled to make good, and therefore go to eight pages today," Putnam wrote Scripps on October 2.[70] When Scripps wired him to cease publishing eight pages immediately, Putnam telegraphed back a further defense: "Have not violated agreement but followed its spirit enlarging only when business necessitated as Star also recently done. Am convinced my actions been for best interests all stockholders including yourself. Come here judge situation yourself."[71] Putnam's claim the Seattle Star

was also publishing eight pages only added to Scripps' anger, and reminded him of his efforts to keep the Star at four pages. But Scripps was not about to undertake a journey from Miramar to Spokane to argue with a recalcitrant manager.

By October 8 Scripps realized that Putnam had gone ahead in spite of his negative telegram and was publishing eight pages daily. He also pulled out of McRae an admission that Putnam had indeed suggested that McRae try to buy out the Scripps' interests in the Press. His next letter to Putnam arrayed the evidence as carefully and coldly as a prosecutor presenting his case. He cited the original agreement of August 17, 1902, signed by Putnam, E. W. and Ellen Scripps. He quoted again that the agreement of the partners was that ". . .a small paper is more profitable, because it is more popular than a large paper."[72] He reviewed the correspondence between himself and Putnam. He accused Putnam of hiding his eight-page experiment by not sending him copies of the Press promptly. "I have had no warning that my property and sister Ellen's was to be greatly injured and perhaps destroyed by an act of bad faith on your part, and absolute violation of your signed agreement with us. You must run the Press as a four page paper until you have full sanction to enlarge it. . ."[73] Also on the same date, Ellen Scripps wrote to Putnam, pleading with him to follow her brother's instructions. Although no word of praise of Putnam appears in Scripps' letters to Putnam, Ellen claimed Scripps was proud and delighted with the progress of the Press. The real issue, Ellen wrote, was Putnam's

wrote, was Putnam's challenge to Scripps' authority as majority owner in the Press. "Grant even that your principal is arbitrary and autocratic. While he has the power, you must submit."[74]

Another futile exchange of telegrams between Putnam and Scripps led no where. Scripps then ordered Putnam to leave the Press, and come to Miramar for a face to face session.[75] There is no written record of their discussions. When Putnam left Miramar, he carried back to Spokane a directive demoting him from general manager to business manager of the Press.[76] In the Scripps scheme of things that meant he was no longer responsible for the news or editorial content of the Press. He would direct only circulation and advertising, and a new editor would have the overall responsibility for the Press.

Scripps also ordered the Press size immediately be cut back to four pages. Scripps wanted, he dictated, a newspaper ". . .founded upon the respect and confidence of that largest class of every community, the wage earners and small property owners. The mission of The Press is that of advocate, representative, mouth-piece and spokesman of its party in the community--the advisor, the peace-maker and the information bureau to all the community."[77] Scripps admitted the enlarged Press had enjoyed strong advertising support from Spokane merchants. He feared, however, that with expansion too much of the Press' revenue came from advertising. That could lead to advertisers dictating news and editorial policy. "We are reducing the size [of the Press]," Scripps explained, "because

Ellen Scripps and myself in thirty years of experience with over twenty different newspapers learned that which teaches us that this is the best policy."[78]

Putnam returned to Spokane, and wrote a final plea for an eight-page paper, to which Scripps replied in a telegram: "No 8 page papers at all."[79] On November 2, Putnam asked to be released from his partnership in the Press. Putnam admitted he still believed in the eight-page paper for the Spokane Press. "The cut and dried rules that you have deduced from experiences in larger cities must be modified for the small town." Putnam added: "I have looked the problem fairly in the face. The best of my vitality goes to build up a property for you, and I get a salary insufficient to pay half my expenses. You can afford to burn up men as the engineers of Egypt burn mummies; but the men cant [sic] afford to be burnt up unless the stakes are big. It will be years before the gross receipts here equal $5000 monthly. 5% of this means $250 per month, which divided between two men is a salary of $125. I can earn twice that now without the heart rendering [sic] effort and responsibility placed upon me."[80] Scripps, however, would not suffer if the Press remained small and earned minimal profits. "You will make interest on the money invested . . . Meanwhile you have a feeder for your N. E. A., your press service, your Central Fund and other parasitic institutions. You cant [sic] loose [sic]."[81]

Scripps was ill in bed when Putnam's letter reached Miramar.[82] He was unaware of Putnam's resignation until

November 19. Then, Scripps refuted Putnam's charges against the Scripps News Service, N. E. A. and the Central Bank. He was actually losing money on the two news services; he only endorsed loans obtained by the Bank, guaranteeing the bank against loss. The advances for new newspaper equipment and operating expenses earned no interest for him, Scripps claimed. He also accepted Putnam's resignation, and promised a bonus if Putnam would continue with the Press until a successor could be found.[83]

Two days later Scripps wrote Putnam a more conciliatory letter. He hinted at some future assignment in the Scripps organization for Putnam, and promised to pay him $35 a week--almost three times his previous $12 a week salary--for continuing at the Press. In addition, he proposed to continue to pay Putnam $35 a week after he left the Press ". . .until the same shall aggregate a sum equal to 25% of whatever the property is worth more than it has cost at the time of your leaving."[84] Scripps added: "I will not disguise the fact that I have some hopes that the result of this consideration may be that you and I will find some way of continuing our association in some field."[85]

Scripps hopes were unfulfilled. Scripps was to withdraw from active management of his newspapers in 1908.[86] Putnam never again worked in the Scripps organization. Putnam's newspaper career, however, extended to the 1950s. He became the successful publisher of two Oregon dailies, the Medford Mail-Tribune and the Salem Capital Journal. In his Oregon years, Putnam earned recognition for his fight for constituional free speech

guarantees after a libel conviction in 1908, and for his battle against the Ku Klux Klan in the 1922 Oregon gubernatorial election.[87]

But the issues debated in the correspondence between Scripps and Putnam in the founding year of the Spokane Press were significant both then and as an outline of the future. The letters and telegrams permit us to eavesdrop on the debate as Putnam and Scripps argued it. These discussions offer insights on newspaper policy and economics that no retrospective view can match. Scripps' regulations and red tape frustrated Putnam as much as any modern manager feels hamstrung by distant directives from corporate headquarters. Scripps style of managing suggests a policy direction and quality control almost comparable to the franchise businesses of the 1980s. Let's make the hamburger (newspaper in Spokane) identical to those in Cleveland, Cincinnati, San Diego and Los Angeles. This concept demands the regulations and red tape under which Putnam chafed. At the same time Scripps gave Putnam and the Press financial backing obtainable under no other circumstances.

Scripps' belief in newspaper competition made necessary his devotion to a readership audience of working class and poor. Competition required a newspaper avowedly distinct from its fellows in the community. But increasing public education and social mobility were making class stratifications less rigid as the twentieth century progressed. Nor could this narrow readership in the long run have earned the advertising support

support the Press needed. To Scripps, however, his policies differentiated his papers from his business-oriented Republican competitors.

The crux of the Putnam-Scripps debate was over the role of advertising in the press. Putnam wanted a larger paper in order to increase advertising volumes and revenues; Scripps feared increased advertising volumes and revenues would make the Press a carbon copy of the news and editorial policy of the competing business-oriented Spokane newspapers, the Spokesman-Review and the Chronicle. That would have destroyed the Press' distinctiveness and its carefully cultivated differentiation.

Neither Scripps nor Putnam could find a solution in 1903 to a problem that has been as puzzling to succeeding generations in American newspaper journalism.

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NOTES

1. Oliver Knight, ed. I Protest, Selected Disquisitions of E. W. Scripps, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966) See pages 78-83, and 198-207.
2. Clifford F. Weigle, "The Young Scripps Editor: Keystone of E. W.'s 'System'," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 41:360-6 (Summer, 1964).
3. Alfred McClung Lee, The Daily Newspaper in America, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937).
4. Will Irwin, "The American Newspaper, A Study of Journalism in Relation to the Public," Colliers Weekly, January 21 through July 22, 1911.
5. Knight, p.85.
6. George Putnam collection, University Of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR, Memorandum of Agreement between E. W. Scripps, Ellen Browning Scripps and George Putnam, August 17, 1902.
7. Ibid.
8. George Stanley Turnbull, An Oregon Crusader, (Portland: Binfords & Mort, 1955), p. xii.
9. Vance H. Trimble Collection from the archives of the E. W. Scripps Trust, Cincinnati, Ohio. George Putnam to Ellen B. Scripps, April 16, 1901.
10. George Putnam to Ellen B. Scripps, May 18, 1901.
11. George Putnam to Ellen B. Scripps, July 8, 1902.
12. George Putnam to L. T. Atwood, August 18, 1902.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Thirteenth Census (1910) of the United States, Abstract of the Census with Population for Washington, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), p. 75.
16. Ibid.
17. Ralph E. Dyar, News of An Empire, (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1952), p. 80.
18. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, August 22, 1902.
19. Ibid.
20. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, February 21, 1903.
21. Ibid., April 28, 1903.
22. Memorandum of Agreement Among E. W. Scripps, Ellen Browning Scripps and George Putnam, August 17, 1902.
23. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, August 24, 1902.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, August 25, 1902.
29. L. T. Atwood to George Putnam, September 4, 1902.
30. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, September 8, 1902.

31. George Putnam to L. T. Atwood, November 22, 1902.
32. Ibid., December 14, 1902.
33. Spokane Press, November 7, 1902.
34. George Putnam to L. T. Atwood, November 22, 1902.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Spokane Press, October 6, 1903.
39. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, February 21, 1903.
40. Ibid.
41. Spokane Press, January 13, 1903.
42. Ibid., February 17, 1903.
43. Ibid., February 18, 1903.
44. Ibid.
45. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, February 23, 1903.
46. Spokane Press, February 26, 1903.
47. Ibid.
48. J. P. Hamilton to George Putnam, February 25, 1903.
49. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, March 18, 1903.
50. Spokane Press, March 11, 1903.
51. Ibid., July 27, 1903.
52. Ibid., August 5, 1903.
53. Ibid., August 12, 1903.
54. Ibid.
55. George Putnam to E. W. Scripps, April 10, 1903.
56. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, April 28, 1903.
57. Ibid.
58. Monthly Statement, Spokane Press, June-December, 1903.
59. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, April 28, 1903.
60. Ibid.
61. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, June 4, 1903.
62. George Putnam to E. W. Scripps, September 14, 1903.
63. Ibid.
64. Telegram, E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, September 18, 1903.
65. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, September 18, 1903.
66. Ibid., September 19, 1903.
67. Ibid.
68. Milton A. McRae to E. W. Scripps, September 28, 1903.
69. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, October 3, 1903.
70. George Putnam to E. W. Scripps, October 2, 1903.
71. Telegram, George Putnam to E. W. Scripps, October(?), 1903.
72. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, October 8, 1903.
73. Ibid.
74. Ellen Browning Scripps to George Putnam, October 8, 1903.
75. Telegram, E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, October 10, 1903.
76. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, October 19, 1903.
77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.
79. Telegram, E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, October 28, 1903.
80. George Putnam to E. W. Scripps, November 2, 1903.
81. Ibid.
82. J. P. Hamilton to George Putnam, November 9, 1903.
83. E. W. Scripps to George Putnam, November 19, 1903.
84. Ibid., November 21, 1903.
85. Ibid.
86. Knight, p. 83.
87. Turnbull, p. xii.

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